Sc 2568B

THOUGHTS
on
The STATE of the MANUFACTURES,
and the
EXPORTATION of TWIST, &c.

I BELIEVE there never was a period in which the commerce of this country was so critically situated as the present, or when the counsel of every enlightened mind was so requisite to guide our conduct respecting it.

Many concurring circumstances render it the duty of every one possessed of abilities or experience, to offer his best advice, that out of the collective wisdom of the country, remedial regulations may be framed that are likeliest to avert the dangers that threaten us; for whatever difference of opinion there may be on the system to be pursued by us, there is but one among well-informed men, that our choice will determine the fate of this country.

We have been too supine; we have relied on a long course of commercial prosperity too much; we have felicitated ourselves on the enjoyment of many high advantages, till we have fancied that no prudence was requisite to preserve them, and blinded with this fatal vanity, we have disregarded the speculative practices of men, whose best motive could only be a dishonest love of gain, till they have produced a complication of mischiefs never experienced by one state, and which are become almoft irremediable, and we find ourselves on the very brink of ruin; but the attention of the public is rousing to a sense of its danger. One nefarious branch of speculation has at length produced consequences that come home to every man, that are

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felt too plainly to be endured without complaint: we have begun to discover that the exportation of twist has silently, but rapidly operated so far the ruin of the most lucrative of our manufactures, that *foreigners can now afford a higher price for materials than we can*; which, whether we acknowledge it or not, is demonstrable proof that our commerce has already sustained a wound, and if its destruction is not complete, it is begun, and far advanced.

The great argument set up for the exportation of twist is, that if we do not export it, the people on the continent will begin to spin themselves. If this be argument, is it not already refuted by fact? They have attempted, and are attempting, and with what success I need not say, only I must ask these sapient objectors, if they really believe that our rivals come so far to lay out so much ready money merely to encourage our twist manufacture? Is it not possible that the better reason is, that they cannot *yet* equal us in that branch, and are *compelled* to come to our market; and might one not expect a different conclusion to be drawn by these *sagacious pokers into futurity*? i. e. that if we continue to supply them with our best twist, we shall by that means nourish and support their manufactures till they can perfect themselves in spinning, and then we may bid adieu at once to both spinning and manufacturing. I trust my countrymen will not be convinced by such reasoning, if folly can be mistaken for reason. I will yet hope that a patriotic policy will direct us to a conduct contrary to the past. I hope we shall see, that by refusing to supply them, we destroy by that means all hopes of rivalship from their infant manufactures. For if they cannot spin, they cannot supply themselves elsewhere; and if they should attempt to spin, in consequence of our stopping the ex-

portation, it will be a long time before they can spin such perfect twist as ours; and with our superior materials, and other advantages, we shall undoubtedly beat down competition in the foreign markets, even those which NOW are almost exclusively supplied by our rivals. And here let me appeal to your good sense, my countrymen, to decide which is the more prudent part; to force them to manufacture on terms so disadvantageous as non-exportation would reduce them to; or by continuing it, enable them to acquire our perfection gradually, and at the same time to rival us effectually? Do you not see that there is no other means so likely to revive our decaying manufactures? For is it not evident that ours are decaying, and theirs rising? And if our fall be the consequence of their rise, will not their elevation in the commercial balance always be proportionate to our depression? And if they rival us now chiefly, (or *entirely*, according to the advocates for exportation), by the excellency of our spinning, does it not plainly follow, that by discontinuing it we shall cripple or destroy that rivalship more effectually than by any other possible means?

Should it be objected that the spinning trade may receive a shock by the measure of non-exportation, I would reply, that the evil *now felt* by the manufacturing interest, is greater than any that can arise from it, is deeper and wider spread, and involves a greater variety of national considerations than the other. May not the spinners find employment in more healthful branches of our manufacture? May we not hope that those manufactures, reviving in consequence of non-exportation, will flourish and extend again, so as to employ the capital thrown out of action more beneficially? I have no doubt of it; and if this be the case, there is little to be sacrificed, and much to be gained,

even if the objection be well grounded; but it is doubtful if it be. At all events, justice as well as policy require that a few, who have long reaped undue advantages from an unjustifiable traffic, should be deprived of them, rather than the whole country be sacrificed; or, in plain English, *as they have shown no regard to the interest of their country, that country is under no obligation to show any regard to theirs.*

I will allow the advocates for exportation, that spinning is the most difficult operation in the whole process of the manufactures; the very fact of exportation proves this: and if we *continue* it, we facilitate the efforts of our rivals, who, by our furnishing them with the *best* of our twist, may *apply themselves at leisure* to perfect the spinning branch, while *in the mean time* they are supplied to the *extent* of their demands from hence.

The spirit of enterprize *has* already shown itself in *attempts to spin:* and when we reflect on the astonishing inventions and improvements that have brought this, as well as other branches of the cotton manufacture, to their present degree of perfection, in a few years, how can we hope that those who *now* find means to reap the fruits of our industry and ingenuity, will not be *finally successful* in carrying those inventions into their own country, where they will be fostered by a sounder policy than we have shown them; where *cheap labor*, *low taxes*, and the *favor of the state*, will soon nourish them to a degree of maturity that will rival, or perhaps, *under opposite circumstances*, annihilate the trade of this country. It is painful to look at the prospect in this light; the friend of his country will neither love to indulge the reflections which this view excites, or know how to forbear entirely; for it is not enough considered how precariously our commerce stands; how imminently dangerous it is to neglect any mean of preserving it; it is not

enough known, that FRANCE, *even under the revolutionary torrent*, has, with considerable care, cultivated the spinning and weaving of muslins, and that rewards, *highly liberal*, have been given to *adventurers* from *this country:* for it is a fact, that several of the first improvers of the cotton manufacture are now resident in France, whither they were driven by laws, the policy of which has been long disputed: and I think I am not misinformed, that many have gone over in consequence of the encouragement held out. And I submit it to the candour of my countrymen, if there is not too much reason to apprehend that many of the most ingenious and industrious manufacturers may be tempted to emigrate to France, on the return of peace, if the republican form of government be preserved and consolidated.

If we have seen a sordid self-interest powerful enough to induce those who are loudest in their professions of affection to the monarchy of this country, to pursue a traffic that directly strikes at its very existence, how much more reasonable is it to expect that political prejudices, co-operating with motives of interest, will lead men to seek an establishment under a favorite form of government: and should any man be ignorant enough to slight such considerations, let him enquire how several of the most lucrative manufactures became established in England.

I forbear the observations that naturally arise in this view of the subject: my aim is to excite reflection. I have not the vanity to suppose I can instruct my countrymen; but there is one reflection which presses so peculiarly as to strike the most negligent, i. e. that with *resources precarious* and *diminishing*, and TAXES *permanent* and *increasing*, the RUIN of a STATE IS INEVITABLE.

P. S. Having seen "Remarks on the Exportation of Twist," in which the author says he has collected a few such arguments as seem to *him* important, &c. I cannot say how they appear to him, but to others they have so obviously a different appearance, that the public will not fail to apply his censure of the manufacturer's address to his own performance, "that he does not forward the object he has in view," for there is not one syllable of the arguments that he has *collected*, which is not so unfortunately chosen as to apply with irresistible force against the cause for the support of which he has *collected his arguments*. I wish not to offend this gentle critic, this milk and water polemic; but I cannot forbear remarking, that his expression brought forcibly to my mind the *old woman collecting simples*.

The *first argument* of this *venerable collector* is of the dogmatic sort: "It is prepoſterous to suppose the neighbouring nations *would look on* and *see* their subjects* unemployed, while they have a remedy in their own power:" So say the advocates for non-exportation, who will thank this gentleman for his concurrence in maintaining the necessity of guarding our manufactures with jealousy, lest after we have employed a great part of their poor with *weaving our twist*, they may take it in their heads to employ the rest in *spinning*; "for it is *preposterous* to suppose they will see *any part* of their subjects unemployed, while they have a *remedy in their own power*."

The second argument is of the didactic kind, and is contained in this memorable remark, that foreigners may be supplied with *cotton* from AFRICA, and that WOOL is the *exclusive* produce of Britain. I request the attention of the public to this singular *argument*; and it will doubtless conclude, that if the

* The idea of nations *looking on* and *seeing* their subjects, i.e. themselves, is an instance of the *profound* style, which will never be equalled, except by "Candour."

woollen manufacturers are so much alarmed with the idea of the cloth trade *removing from one corner of the empire to another*, when we have the entire growth of the material, how much more reason have the cotton manufacturers to be alarmed, lest the manufacture of cotton ſhould be thrown into the hands of foreigners, who may be supplied from *any part of the world* with the raw material?

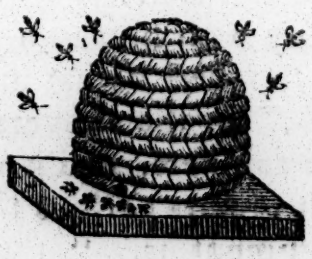
The third argument is, "that the manufactures on the continent are as old, and have extended as much as ours; and that they ſpun their own twiſt, till we generouſly ſupplied them with it better wrought, and on lower terms, than they could ſpin it;" and concludes by informing us, with the dignity of oracular wiſdom, "that twiſt is a *manufactured article*, and *not* a *raw material*." The direct inference from all this is, that by ſelling them *better* twiſt than they can ſpin, for *leſs money*, we enable them to underſell us, eſpecially as they give lower wages conſiderably than we do, for weaving.

His next argument is of the terrific kind: "that ſpinners are a numerous body, and it is eaſier to excite diſcontent and riot, than to allay them."—We agree heartily with him in this, and alſo requeſt gentlemen to reflect "what may be the probable conſequences;" for the weavers are *forty times* as numerous as the ſpinners, and it will be *more difficult* to quell a riot of *forty* perſons than *one*.

The laſt argument is, "that we have not hands enough to manufacture for all Europe;" this we believe; and it is one of the beſt reaſons in the world why we ſhould be careful to ſuffer none of the advantages we poſſeſs, to be given to foreigners; becauſe to retain them is the likeliest means of enſuring employment to our peaſants, opulence to our merchants, and ſtrength and grandeur to the ſtate: but if we continue to ſell them twiſt for leſs than they can ſpin it; and teach them, by our pat-

terns, to equal or excel us, the reverse will be certain; our manufacturers must emigrate or starve, our merchants become bankrupts, and the state enfeebled, and finally ruined.

I have one thing more to remark, and then I will dismiss this 'remarker,' viz. that from the peculiar infelicity of his choice of arguments and language, and the curiosity of his facts, there is room to suspect that he intended the reverse of what he apparently advances; and the public will, no doubt, be gratified, if he will explain which side of the question he designs to support.



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